





# **BLETCHLEY**

## **Urban District Council**



# ***ANNUAL REPORT***

**OF THE**

**MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH**

**AND OF THE**

**CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR**

**FOR THE YEAR**

**1968**

Chairman of the Council :

Councillor W. CALDWELL, J.P.

**PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

Chairman :

Councillor E. R. STANIFORD, J.P.

Members :

Councillors

Mrs. G. E. GREENAWAY,

C. F. BOWDEN,

E. W. DANIELS,

H. C. R. HEAD,

L. J. MAY,

R. E. MUNDELL.



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PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

Medical Officer of Health:

P. Lavis, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

(The Medical Officer of Health is also M.O.H. for Buckingham M.B. the Urban Districts of Newport Pagnell and Wolverton, the Rural Districts of Buckingham, Newport Pagnell and Winslow, Area M.O. for North Bucks and Divisional S.M.O. for the North Bucks Division and the Buckingham and Winslow District.)

Deputy Medical Officer of Health:

J. P. Hutchby, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H. (to 30th September 1968)

Chief Public Health Inspector:

A. James, M.A.P.H.I.

Additional Public Health Inspector:

J. R. Bailey, M.A.P.H.I.

Pupil Public Health Inspector:

D. J. Wells.

Rodent Officer:

A. G. Meacham.

Clerical Assistant:

Miss C. Stamp.

To the Chairman and Councillors of the

Bletchley Urban District Council

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report of the Public Health Department for the year 1968.

Vital Statistics

The figures, shown on pages 7 and 8, present a picture of a young, vigorous and physically healthy population in many respects better than national standards. Apart from immigration the local people continue to contribute to the increase in population in no small measure and there is a sizeable gap between the birth and death rates.

Communicable Diseases

The majority of infectious diseases are now mainly of nuisance value though even the commonest can occasionally result in serious handicapping conditions. During the year, vaccination against measles began on a wide scale but could not be started early enough to prevent completely the expected epidemic. All immunising procedures are now arranged by computer so that a more complete coverage of these protective measures will be achieved in the future.

Isolated cases of dysentery - of one type or another - continue to crop up for which there is no adequate drug treatment. While the patients recover reasonably rapidly they often remain "carriers" of the infection for long periods afterwards. Scrupulous personal hygiene is the only safeguard against further spread.

The Health Services and Public Health Act 1968 came into operation on 1st October. This Act re-defines the notifiable diseases and improves legislation concerned with the control of food poisoning. There has also been some tightening of procedure relating to the health of immigrants from other countries, but the position is still far from satisfactory.

Environmental Health

Milton Keynes Development Corporation, like Bletchley Urban District Council, has accepted the desirability of smoke controlled areas. Measurement gauges are being installed in the town and proposals were put to the Ministry in November 1967. Approval is still awaited from the Ministry.

At the time of writing a new environmental hazard is threatening the district, viz., aircraft noise from the possible airport site at Cublington. It will not be necessary for me to draw attention to this as adequate publicity will be given but it is my duty to point out that everyone living



or working in Bletchley will be affected and each person should consider seriously whether this is an element of life he or she is prepared to accept. They should then make their views known to their elected representative. This new hazard needs to be viewed against a background of increasing noise from other sources, in particular motor vehicles, and the fact that it will be permanent and all-pervading. The quality of life will be affected, and people's views of what constitutes a "civilised" life will need to be re-appraised. Medical evidence on the affects of noise is being formulated for submission to the public enquiry but I must emphasize that too much reliance should not be placed on noise level contours that will be published prior to that enquiry.

### Health Education

One of the monthly themes emphasized this year was poisoning hazard in the home. With the kind co-operation of most of the chemists, the public were invited to hand in their old and surplus medicines. A surprising quantity was brought in, much of it lethal if misused. I hope that many people were also reminded by this means to safeguard children from these.

### General

I would like to pay special tribute to certain voluntary organisations in Bletchley who are contributing to the well-being of the community in terms of health, welfare and financial aid. The Old Peoples' Welfare Organisation provides a valuable service that cannot be met by statutory organisations in supporting the elderly and offering the personal and intimate attention to those who might otherwise be isolated and declining through loneliness. Among the services provided is a supply of hot meals essential to a vulnerable section of the community, and this together with "home helps" enable many to live decently in their own homes rather than be looked after in hospitals. The need for such voluntary help will continue to grow and Milton Keynes will not be a health community if voluntary effort is not forthcoming. Whatever juggling is carried out by parliament as a result of the Seebohm report, National Health service re-organisation or local government re-organisation, the need will be still there.

Similarly, the Family Planning clinic in Bletchley relies on people prepared to spend time working for others. The majority of people still refuse to accept that present birth rates can only lead to chaos and eventual catastrophe. The need for the Abortion Act would be diminished if everyone had knowledge of, and accepted their responsibilities in contraception. Many of the distressing problems that are dealt with by the Health and Childrens' Department could have been avoided if the subject had not been submerged in ignorance and mystic mumbo-jumbo in the past.

The Bletchley clinic, started by a group of local doctors, nurses and voluntary helpers has grown at such a pace that it is now difficult to cope with the needs of the responsible members of society. With the re-organisation of the Family Planning Association, ultimate control has passed to Oxford, though the hardest work has been done by local people. I hope expansion can

be maintained when the Water Eaton Health Centre opens, but this will depend on availability of voluntary helpers until the service is fully incorporated into the National Health Service. In the meantime one hopes that parents will gradually realise that ignorance by teenagers is no longer a virtue.

In conclusion I must thank the Council for the continued interest they show in public health work and their especial regard for those important matters that do not appear on balance sheets but nevertheless have an immense bearing on the physical and emotional life of the Bletchley inhabitant.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

P. Lavis.



# V I T A L   S T A T I S T I C S

1967

1968

## GENERAL:

Area (in acres)	4,459	4,459
Population (mid-year estimate)	24,980	26,440
Number of Houses	7,562	8,105
Rateable Value (1st April)	£1,311,743	£1,421,036
Rate per £1	11/11d	11/10d
Sum represented by 1d rate	£5,500	£6,200

## BIRTHS:

Legitimate	Males	294	321
	Females	261	265
Illegitimate	Males	12	17
	Females	16	15
Birth Rate per 1,000 Population	-(adjusted)	18.6	18.5
Birth Rate per 1,000 Population	-Bucks		
	County	18.1	17.9
Birth Rate per 1,000 Population	-England &		
	Wales	17.2	16.9
Stillbirths	Males	3	2
	Females	2	4

## DEATHS:

Death Rate per 1,000 Population	(adjusted)	11.0	11.5
Death Rate per 1,000 Population	-Bucks		
	County	8.9	9.1
Death Rate per 1,000 Population	-England &		
	Wales	11.2	11.9
Infant Mortality (rate per 1,000 births)		10.3	10.0
	England &		
	Wales	18.3	18.0

	Males			Females		
	Total	Legit.	Illegit.	Total	Legit.	Illegit.
Live Births	338	321	17	280	265	15
Stillbirths	2	2	-	4	4	-
Deaths of Infants						
Under 1 year of age	4	4	-	2	2	-
Under 4 weeks of age	4	4	-	2	2	-
Under 1 week of age	4	4	-	1	1	-

# PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF DEATH:

	<u>1967</u>			<u>1968</u>		
	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.
Cancer:						
Stomach	3	1	4	4	2	6
Lungs, Bronchus	11	2	13	12	1	13
Breast	0	2	2	0	1	1
Other	10	14	24	6	10	16
Leukaemia	2	1	3	4	0	4
Vascular lesion of nervous system	5	12	17	7	10	17
Heart Disease	18	13	31	23	24	47
Other circulatory diseases	7	4	11	6	6	12
Pneumonia	7	7	14	6	5	11
Bronchitis	7	2	9	5	1	6
Congenital Malformations	3	0	3	1	1	2
Accidents: Motor Vehicles)	0	1	1	3	1	4
Other	2	1	3	2	0	2
All other causes	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>24</u>
	85	68	153	94	71	165

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

### NOTIFICATIONS:

Dysentery	8	Tuberculosis (respiratory)	1
Scarlet Fever	13	Tuberculosis (other than respiratory)	1
Measles	104	Infective Jaundice	2
Whooping Cough	6	Food Poisoning	3

P E R S O N A L   H E A L T H   S E R V I C E S

<u>Area Health Office:</u>	(Tel: 4701). 224 Queensway, Bletchley.
<u>Ambulance Service:</u>	(Tel: 2565). Administered by Bucks County Council, stationed at Whalley Drive.
<u>Hospitals:</u>	Under the Oxford Regional Hospital Board. Patients treated at Aylesbury, Northampton and Bedford. General Practitioners' Maternity Unit at Whalley Drive. Outpatients facilities for Chest Diseases; Ear, Nose and Throat; Dermatology; Ophthalmology; Paediatrics; Psychiatry; Surgery; Gynaecology; Orthopaedics.
<u>Public Health Laboratory:</u>	Kimbolton Road, Bedford.
<u>Health Visitors:</u>	Area Superintendent - Mrs. D. L. Marett (at Area Health Office).
<u>District Nurses:</u> )	Area Superintendent - Mrs. O. Riley (at Area Health Office).
<u>Midwives:</u> )	
<u>Social Workers:</u>	(Medical, Welfare, Blind, Mental Health). Area Officer - Mr. P. K. Smith (at Area Health Office).
<u>Home Help Service:</u>	Area Organiser - Mrs. E. N. Franklin (at Area Health Office).
<u>Occupational Therapy Centre:</u>	Supervisor - Mrs. Martin (Tel: 2073), 226 Queensway.
<u>Industrial Unit:</u>	Supervisor - Mrs. Beryl (Tel: 2811), Whaddon Way.
<u>Residential Accommodation for Elderly:</u>	The Coppice, Whalley Drive.
<u>Child Health Clinics:</u>	Whalley Drive (Tel: 3781). Also Methodist Hall, Queensway, Thursday afternoons.
<u>Dental Clinic:</u>	Whalley Drive (Tel: 3784). Treatment is available to school children and expectant mothers.
<u>Child Guidance Clinic:</u>	Whalley Drive (Tel: 8783). Psychiatrist: Dr. M. Lindsay.

Health Education Officer:

Miss P. Haywood (at Area Health Office).

School Health Service:

Administered from Area Health Office. This service is responsible for examination of pupils in accordance with the Education Act 1944, ascertainment of handicapped pupils and arranging appropriate treatment. Vaccination and immunisation is also arranged.

Childrens' Department:

Area Child Care Officer - Miss J. M. Walker (Tel: 4701), 224 Queensway.

Family Planning Clinic:

Child Welfare Clinic, Whalley Drive. By appointment (Tel: 2285).

Marriage Guidance Council:

Appointments for Bletchley area (Tel: Soulbury 252). Interviews held at Whalley Drive Clinic.



## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT

### WATER SUPPLY

The Bucks Water Board have reported the following information:

- (a) the water supply to the district has been satisfactory in quantity and quality throughout the year.
- (b) 76 samples of raw water have been examined bacteriologically. One sample contained coliform organisms which were not E. Coli type 1.  
104 samples of treated water have been examined, including those from consumers' taps. One had a very low count of coliform organisms which were not E. Coli type 1.
- (c) typical analyses of the three supplies to the district are set out below. The fluoride content of both the Sandhouse and Mid-Bucks supplies is virtually nil, but the Grafham source contains 0.1 to 0.2 p.p.m.
- (d) no contamination was detected.

### PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

	<u>Grafham</u>	<u>Mid-Bucks</u>	<u>Sandhouse</u>
Appearance	Clear & bright	Clear & bright	Clear & bright
pH Value	7.5	7.4	7.7
Colour	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5
Turbidity	Less than 1	Less than 1	Nil

### CHEMICAL EXAMINATION

Ammonia Nitrogen	0.01	Less than 0.01	Less than 0.01
Albuminoid Nitrogen	0.19	Less than 0.01	Less than 0.01
Nitrate Nitrogen	0.52	4.08	Less than 0.1
O <sub>2</sub> absorbed from permanganate	1.0	0.1	Nil
Free CO <sub>2</sub>	15	21	4
Alkalinity as CaCO <sub>3</sub>	150	239	180
Carbonate Hardness	150	239	180
Non-Carbonate Hardness	55	24	20
Total Hardness	205	263	200
Total Solids	520	293	200
Calcium, as Ca	67	104	71
Magnesium, as Mg	9	1	5
Sulphate, as SO <sub>4</sub>	183	13	38
Chloride, as Cl	63	17	17
Iron, as Fe : Total	0.03	Nil	0.03
Fluoride as F	0.1-0.2	Less than 0.1	Less than 0.1
Residual Chlorine	0.2	0.15	0.1



The Engineer and Surveyor has reported throughout the year;

## DRAINAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

As the summer started complaints were received of smells from the sewage disposal works.

The sludge concentrator had been out of action whilst shot blasting, cleaning and painting was carried out and during this time, the settlement tanks had had to be emptied of a build-up of sludge caused partly by the inoperation of the concentrator and partly by the increased load on the works.

To combat the smell it was proposed to extend the odour control equipment by adding another two spraying points.

During the second week in July a "once-in-a-lifetime" storm occurred causing serious flooding all over the town. The worst hit area was undoubtedly the Brookland Estate where two streams merge before flowing under Water Eaton Road. The water level rose during the night flooding gardens, roads and penetrating into the ground floors of houses where damage was sustained to carpets and furnishings. Council workmen were engaged several days afterwards on clearing debris from these private streams and assisting in drying out houses with power-heaters hired by the Council.

There were numerous reports of the back-flooding of sewage from foul sewers and surcharging of the main trunk sewer resulted in the sewage works being flooded.

Some time after the storm, larger impellers were fitted to the pumps in the main pumping station to alleviate the surcharging of the storm tanks, however, blockages became more frequent due to the reduced clearance between the blades and the casing and consideration had to be given to the installation of a comminutor to macerate rags, etc., to reduce the size of particles entering the pumps.

Some anxiety was suffered by the Brooklands area residents when in September another but less serious storm occurred. Later on in the year discussions were being held on ways and means that the Council might be able to assist in the prevention of future inundations.

Negotiations were continued throughout the year, on the land adjacent to the disposal works required for the much needed extensions and as the year closed the Council had agreed to withdraw the proposed compulsory purchase order.

Effluent samples continued to be poor with little hope of improvement before the extensions were built.

## REFUSE DISPOSAL

Tipping at the sewage works re-opened site had to be continued whilst getting ready the new tip at the clay pit of the Newton Longville works of the London Brick Company.

Building of the access road to the new site and other preparatory work ran into difficulties and the year was nearly half over by the time the tip was put into use.

The tip did not escape the results of the severe storms and it was later generally found that the amount of surface water gaining access from adjacent land during wet weather made operations very difficult.

Flooding often made the bottom of the tip unusable and deposits had to take place at higher levels as a temporary measure. Vehicles became bogged down and because of the steep access, were having to be towed out by tractor.

Complaints were received that flies were causing a nuisance to employees at the London Brick Company and action was taken to treat the tip regularly with insecticides.

Consideration was given towards the end of the year to the extension of the paper sack system of collection to other districts.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

To the Chairman and Members of the Bletchley Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report on the work of the Public Health Inspectors' Department for 1968.

One may regret the passage of another year as its message fades with the weakening memory. A new year always looks more attractive with hopes of better things to come, but an occasional look back over one's shoulder, as it were, is seldom completely without profit, for experience can sometimes be more potent than hope.

The year 1968 was as busy a twelve months as any of the years since the Department was founded.

The absence of a tangible product does not help the public health worker to present progress in an exciting fashion and it is often difficult to stimulate interest in environmental health amongst a public who generally expect to see result for effort. Still the year may be seen as not an entirely unfruitful one, with one or two events which may prove of interest to some.

Reference was made in my last Report to the difficulties of administration which were mounting as a result of the volume and pressure of duties. There was a danger of becoming the slaves of the situation instead of the master. For example, it will be readily seen from the section on food that the subject of hygiene requires consistent and persistent attention without which it is quick to failure, yet every effort to educate must be limited to the opportunity.

Environmental hygiene is not a material commodity which can be sold by high pressure salesmanship. It is something that needs the implication patiently explaining and the practical implementation seen to be applied.

The last fifteen years has seen the introduction of much new legislation in our field - acts on food; the many regulations governing food, premises, and vehicles; inspection of all meat; slum clearance and house improvement; clean air and noise abatement; working conditions in offices and shops. It will be readily evident that a Department must be adequately equipped to cope with this vast amount of work and that the old criterion of assessing staff numbers in relation to population is no longer valid.

As was expected the year and its days were full, yet it ended on a note of promise of relief with the annual staff review making provision for an establishment increase on the qualification of our staff. The alleviation may, however, prove only temporary for there is an imminent commitment to an extensive smoke control programme.

Nevertheless our spirit and enthusiasm will not be daunted. We shall



look forward with optimism, recognising that we will by no means solve all our problems and that 1969 will be another busy year.

I must once again pay tribute to colleagues and staff for their assistance, to the Medical Officer of Health for his unfailing support and to the Members of the Health Committee for their patience and understanding.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

A. James.

MEAT INSPECTION

The economy of the country and the meat trade suffered a stunning blow from the impact of the Foot and Mouth outbreak during late 1967 and early 1968, the tenacious tentacles of the outbreak reaching as near as the borders of a neighbouring county.

The outbreak of the disease caused the loss of over 400,000 animals and cost in compensation over £100 million.

The ruthless measures of the "slaughter policy" are said to be necessary in Britain if we are to be kept free of the disease in its endemic form, for the virus is extremely infectious with a high attack rate in susceptible animals and spreads rapidly by methods as yet not all fully known.

Adult animals may recover from the disease but remain carriers of the virus and therefore likely to proliferate its spread for varying periods up to eighteen months.

Since the three types of virus of Foot and Mouth disease were first recognised, a number of variants have been found and there are now said to be seven main types with forty sub-types. Protection for this and other reasons is difficult to obtain by vaccination, which in any case is short-lived.

There appears, then, to be no less costly alternative to the slaughter of infected and susceptible animals at the site of an outbreak, but the sad fact is that many of the carcasses buried or burnt would have been healthy at the time of slaughter.

The prohibition of wiping cloths, to prevent contamination being spread from carcase to carcase, came into force on 1st November and a water spray is now being used in the slaughterhouse in place of the old method.

Although slaughtering operations have continued to rise, now two and a half times the 1965 numbers, all carcasses were given the required inspection and judgement.

Since no carcase may be removed from the slaughterhouse uninspected, that aspect of our work must of need attract a degree of priority and accounted for 236 visits being made to examine the carcasses and offal of 1,908 animals.

Much of the total of meat condemned - 1 ton, 1 cwt., 17 lbs. - were as a result of parasitic infections, mainly *Fasciola hepatica* (or Liver Fluke).

Due to the prolonged wet weather and the resulting flooded pasture lands, the situation is likely to continue for some time for the fresh water snail, so vital in the life cycle of the fluke, abounds in these conditions.



# DETAILS OF CARCASSES AND OFFAL INSPECTED AND PARTS CONDEMNED

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number slaughtered	160	1	20	1,339	388
Number inspected	160	1	20	1,339	388
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci</u> Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-1	3	2
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	55	1	1	325	37
<u>Tuberculosis only</u> Whole carcasses condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Cysticercosis</u> Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Carcasses submitted to treatment by refrigeration	-	-	-	-	-
Generalised and totally condemned	-	-	-	-	-

## POULTRY INSPECTION

Although the number of visits showed a slight drop from those of the previous year, this was mainly due to reduction in the taking of samples of chill tank water for bacteriological tests.

The installation of automatic chlorine dosing apparatus connected to the supply to water for the majority of the factory processes, ensured better bacteriological control over the various operations and the results of tests on water samples taken were generally satisfactory. We were therefore able to devote a little more attention to other general hygiene aspects.

Birds processed at the local factory are uneviscerated, that is undrawn, known as "New York dressed", and destined for the "fresh" trade. Inspections by the firm's spotters are therefore limited to abnormalities, malformations, bruising and emaciations affecting the carcasses.

The firm is highly conscious of its 'image' for good quality produce and we felt it was of greater importance to pay more attention to carcasses intended for human consumption, than the inspection of those that had been put to one side for rejection.

Towards the latter part of the year, we were invited to comment on a pilot scheme for eviscerated birds to be started in an adjoining vacant factory. As the facilities for good hygienic standards were poor, we reserved judgement until the scheme had been put into practice. Various new articles of equipment were installed and the operation started.

Only a very small number of birds are being processed in this manner mainly to gain experience of the special techniques and to study the feasibility of entering this side of the trade.

Due attention is being paid to this venture to see that reasonable standards are maintained.

#### Prescribed particulars:-

1) number of poultry processing premises.	1
2) number of visits to these premises.	77
3) total number of birds processed during the year.	2,334,560
4) types of birds processed.	Broilers
5) percentage of birds rejected as unfit for human consumption.	0.112
6) weight of poultry condemned.	8,626 lbs

In addition to the above figures, 2,517 birds, dead on arrival due to vehicle accidents, were condemned.

#### UNFIT FOOD

The number of calls to shops for the issue of certificates to cover damaged or unsound cans declined somewhat during the year resulting in a reduction in the number of visits to 45. Nevertheless, the total, which includes dead on arrival poultry, approached eight tons and represents a substantial wastage.

#### Total weight of food condemned

	Tons	cwts	lbs
Meat at slaughterhouse	1	1	17
Meat at retail premises		1	8
Canned meats			101
Other canned foods		2	87
Other foods	6	13	15
Total	7	19	4

#### FOOD COMPLAINTS

The increase in the number of complaints being brought to our attention continues. This may be due to several reasons - the increasing population - a lesser degree of satisfaction from direct complaints to the retailer and



this could well be the result of the disappearance of the personal customer/shopkeeper relationship - an increasing fastidiousness of shoppers and a greater readiness to have investigated the reason why something is wrong with their food.

We also believe that our importance in this field is being recognised by the population and that we have an influence which can often effect improvements.

The investigation of complaints is important and must be done carefully. The Inspector must be impartial but fair to all concerned, protecting not only the customers' interest but also the manufacturer or shopkeeper from trivial or wilful complaints.

It must always be remembered that in carrying out these investigations the real object is to discover how foreign matter gets into a food and to prevent a similar incident happening again. It does not mean that every complaint found justified should automatically lead to a prosecution and in judging the seriousness of any particular incident, the nature of the foreign matter or affectation found is a significant factor.

Thirty six complaints were received ranging from items with odd flavours or damaged packaging to the more serious ones involving decomposition, insect attack, foreign bodies and mould growths. The latter two were about equal in number and constituted nearly two-thirds of all complaints.

The following table shows those complaints warranting investigation;

Table of Complaints

Split pin in cereal	Unsound steak and kidney pie
Defective corned beef can	Mouldy chocolate swiss rolls
Mouldy cheese	Mouldy pork pie
Insect larvae in soft drink	Insects in crispbread packet
Mouldy bread (2)	Glass in jar of mincemeat
Unsound meat	Mouldy scotch pancakes
Flour turned baked goods green	Glass in can of plums
Brush bristle in cake	Metal nut in bread
Mouldy sausage	Poppy head in peas
Mouldy steak and kidney pie	Mouldy canned steak
Decomposing beef burgers	Insect larvae in chocolate
Portion of animal hide in pie	Mouldy fruit pie
Portion of animal hide in beef-burger	

The presence of the split pin was unaccounted for. All fifteen production lines at the factory were fitted with metal detectors which halt the machinery and operate an alarm bell until the offending packet is removed. Trials with the pin introduced into a packet in varying positions failed on each occasion to pass the detector.

Small flies of the family Drosophilidae, commonly known as Fruit or Vinegar Flies, breed in various fermenting materials and infestations are often a nuisance at vinegar or pickle works, breweries, fruit canning factories and milk bottling plants. The eggs laid by the female are cemented to the interior of container where it is practically impossible for washing plant to remove. This was the cause of the complaint received, where some fifteen of the pupae could be seen fixed to the inside of an unopened bottle of a soft drink.

The case of a mouldy loaf of bread, established as being thirteen days old, might have had more serious consequences than the warnings issued to both retailer and distributor had the complainant not wished to be involved in court proceedings.

Co-operation from a more forthright customer resulted in the case of the purchase of a mouldy pork pie being brought before the magistrates. A previous warning to the retailer had brought about no improvement in the taking of adequate precautions in storage and stock rotation. The offence was proved to the satisfaction of the Justices, who penalised to the total amount of £18 in fines and costs.

The fact that so many variable factors can affect the development of an insect from egg to adult makes the investigation of infestations difficult and the establishment of an offender often impossible. The Biscuit Beetle, a pest of stored cereal products, indentified as the insect infesting packets of crispbread, may take from 70 to 200 days to hatch out depending upon the temperature appertaining to the various storage points of the packets after their manufacture abroad. It was unlikely that this had taken place on the retailer's premises and the circumstances of his purchase from a cash and carry warehouse in another town prevented contemplation of any serious action.

After the issue of a warning letter in the matter of the finding of a 3/8" metal nut in a loaf of bread, the bakery concerned replied saying that they intended installing metal detector machines in their premises

Poppy heads are the bane of the pea canners life, explained the largest national firm in this field. In spite of vigorous weeding operations, some are inevitably harvested with pea crops and being of the same size and colour as the peas, they are hardly distinguishable to the sorters on the picking tables. Being of the same density they are often carried through the various washing processes and it is only after canning that the poppy head turns to the dark green colour observed by our complainant.

A quality control expert of a well known firm called and discussed the presence of a moth larvae found on a bar of chocolate. It appears that certain larvae can penetrate the wrappings without trace during its very early stages of development, but on this occasion he thought the complaint to be the result of a larvae of the brown house moth that had crawled into the wrapping during storage in the shop.



These complaints involved us in 85 visits, a proluision of correspondence and many interviews with retailers and manufacturers.

During the year we repeated our previous exercise of issuing in the late spring our Guide on Handling Meat Products to all food establishments. In this Guide we include advice on the code marking of goods and emphasise proper stock rotation.

## FOOD HYGIENE

As will be seen from the later prescribed table, all but a minute proportion of food premises fail to be completely equipped with the full range of washing facilities required by the regulations, and of those failing it might mean only that at the last inspection one item was missing.

However, even with the most ideal of facilities provided, their correct use is something that calls for constant supervision and education in hygiene.

The task of educating food handlers is made more difficult by a continued movement of employees throughout the food trade, possibly affected by better prospects in other industries. Few young people seem to be coming into the trade with the intention of making it a career. Consequently, Inspectors frequently find persons engaged in food handling ignoring even basic principles of hygiene, although this is not always confined to new entrants. It means that the Inspector must be often repeating himself, drawing attention to matters which ought to be common knowledge amongst those who spend their working day handling food.

Dissemination of food hygiene knowledge is not easy and as Inspectors cannot be in food premises all of the time the general public could act to some extent as their own watch-dogs. It is not suggested that every customer should aspire to being a "big brother", but it is futile to visit a shop, for example, and observe an assistant lick her fingers before handling cakes or blow open a paper bag and without saying a word walk out and later "complain" to the Health Department.

Mention has been made in previous reports on the difficulties that can frequently arise from inadequate provision for refuse storage. One particular problem that had affected nearby residents to a supermarket in the previous year and which was thought to have been remedied, recurred with renewed vigour when the store changed ownership and the new management went back to the old practice of keeping all refuse outside.

The whole process for remedy had to be brought into operation and I am happy to report that a much improved storage facility was provided some months later.

With a view to preventing the design of premises themselves contributing to difficulties encountered, the architect to the proposed Lakes Estate shopping development was contacted and during discussion, our points of view on various requirements were made known.



During the planning of a new coffee and snack bar which was opened during the year, an opportunity was taken to follow our practice of requesting the provision of sanitary conveniences for customers.

The Imported Food Regulations 1968, a Circular concerning dogs in food premises and a Code of Practice on Automatic Food Vending Machines were matters received during the year from the Ministries.

The Regulations repealed all previous legislation on food importation and set out to provide for the growing container transport systems by giving all inland authorities power to enforce the various requirements.

The Circular dealt with the need for prohibition of dogs in food premises and felt that the present regulations were adequate to deal with the problem. It advised persuading traders to display notices requesting customers to refrain from bringing their dogs into premises. We ourselves had already dealt with this exercise earlier in the year.

The Code gave advice on hygiene and cleansing techniques for automatic vending machines.

It is understood that the present Food Hygiene Regulations are under review and likely to be amended in the near future.

#### Food Hygiene (General) Regulations 1960

##### Prescribed details:

- 1) number of premises
- 2) number known to be fitted to comply with Regulation 16.
- 3) number known to which Regulation 19 applies.
- 4) number known to be fitted to comply with Regulation 19.

Category	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Bakers	1	1	1	1
Butchers	13	12	13	13
Catering estab. (cafes, canteens, etc.)	58	58	58	58
Confectioners (cakes, sweets, etc.)	15	15	6	6
Fish Shops (wet and fried )	6	6	6	6
Food Factories	7	7	4	4
Food Warehouses	5	5	0	0
General Food Shops	36	35	28	27
Greengrocers	8	8	6	6
Licensed Premises	24	23	24	24

(Regulation 16 requires the provision of a wash-hand basin, with hot and cold water, soap, clean towel and nailbrush. Regulation 19 refers to the provision of a sink with hot and cold water, soap, clean cloths for use where food or equipment require washing)

Visits and inspections paid to premises and vehicles during the year numbered 552; 18 informal notices were served and 14 complied with.

## BACTERIOLOGICAL SAMPLING

The following samples were obtained and submitted to the Public Health Laboratory at Bedford for examination and report.

### Ice-cream

Grade 1 - number of samples - 7	Grade 3 - number of samples - 2
Grade 2 - number of samples - 10	Grade 4 - number of samples - 3

Much of this sampling was directed to restaurants serving ice-cream with meals and the initial results were very poor. There was little understanding of how to protect the catering packs, used in such premises, from contamination.

Instructions had to be given to keep lids on the packs whilst in the refrigerator to prevent condensation dripping onto the product from the refrigerator cover. Advice was also given on the use of a suitable sterilant solution in which to keep the stainless steel server in between dispensing portions of ice-cream.

### Other Substances

Poultry factory chill tank water

- 51 samples - average results much improved, no food poisoning organisms reported

Water - tap - 3 samples - satisfactory

- swimming pools - 12 samples - satisfactory

## P U B L I C   H E A L T H   &   H O U S I N G

### GENERAL

Complaints concerning dampness in dwellings and which invariably turn out to be due to condensation are now established hardy annuals, not only locally but on a national scale also.

Even so, the showing of a special film by the Engineer and Surveyor over three days at Wilton Hall attracted audiences so very small that one would hardly have thought that there was such a problem. At some sessions the number of officers taking part or interested often equalled those from the public sector so poor was the response to the advertised showing.

The film, "Condensation in Housing" made for the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works in response to the general rise in this type of complaint ran for seventeen minutes explaining the causes of condensation and their remedy and afterwards questions were answered by the officers.

Some interesting facts were obtained from a visit to the Building Research Station, where the lecturer described how changes in building



construction methods, the use of hard wall-plasters, omission of air bricks and flues, combined with changes in living habits accentuated the problem. Among average statistics given for water-vapour production were - one-tenth of a pint per person during each hour from normal respiration, two and a half pints by a housewife washing a floor ten feet square, washing up - one pint, indoor clothes drying - twenty-one pints and for flueless oil-heaters - one gallon of water vapour released for each gallon of oil burned.

When explaining to a complainant the remedies of confining vapour producing chores and ensuring adequate ventilation, the improvement of heating arrangements is stressed as probably the most valuable of remedial measures. One tends to be somewhat non-plussed, however, when an occupier retorts that he cannot afford additional heating and confirmed upon observation that no form of heating at all is being used during that particular cold morning visit.

Blockages in drains and sewers continue to call for a goodly number of visits and investigations into causes can become quite involved.

Most of the smell complaints were due to plumbing troubles and blockages or defective drains, as one particular investigation proved. The complainant had observed that every time a neighbour washed paint brushes the smell appeared in her ground floor bathroom. We were able to demonstrate with the aid of a smoke rocket, that the reason was a badly made joint to the water closet basin.

A black pollution accompanied by smell affected the canal northwards from High Street to beyond the Simpson Road canal bridge. We were unable to pin-point the cause, but the occurrence took place not long after the Terrapin conflagration.

The littered state of the southside Queensway service road occasioned several visits and a circular letter requesting more care in the storage of trade refuse.

For the repair of houses, seven informal notices were served and five completed.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Our attention was drawn to four individual cases of persons affected by food poisoning organisms, three by *Salmonella typhimurium* and one by *Salmonella panama*.

Enquiries revealed that the only adult had returned from a conference with the infection and in none of the cases was a source identified. Stool specimens are obtained in all such cases, the patient not being cleared until three consecutive negative results are reported by the Public Health Laboratory.

One child was eventually cleared, but the remaining two, one just of school age and the other a few months old baby, were still under surveillance at the end of the year with no sign of the infection disappearing. Although having passed

the stage of being ill, both still harboured the organism and could pass it on to unaffected persons through inadequate personal hygiene.

A new act, the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968 and new regulations repealed previous legislation on notifiable diseases, deleting some which are considered of little importance. Infective Jaundice is now added to the list. Fees payable to general practitioners for the required notifications were also increased.

## HOUSING

As the opportunities arose visits were made to houses-let-in-lodgings and several changes of ownership were brought to light. Some of the houses are now owner-occupied and have been removed from the list of houses of this category, whilst in three cases notices had to be re-served on new owners and one notice in respect of a house added to the list.

Where overcrowding exists or is suspected, the law allows a notice to be served on the person in control, limiting in each room comprising the house the numbers who may be accommodated for sleeping purposes at any one time. It will be readily seen, therefore, that it is quite possible for more than the total number of persons mentioned in a notice to be using such premises without offence. It is doubtful whether this actually does occur except in some extreme circumstances. On the whole, the houses are run and kept as clean as any all-male, away-from-home workers household can be expected to be.

Inspections of houses are carried out from time to time with view to condemnation. Two dwellings were declared unfit for human habitation and had Closing Orders made against them. The owner of one submitted a schedule of works of repair which, however, were too extensive to be carried out whilst the property remained occupied. On vacation, later in the year, work had started on substantial renovations to make the house fit.

The White Paper, promised by the Government in the early spring, duly materialised entitled "Old Houses into New Homes". It foreshadowed quite considerable changes in legislation relating to the improvement of houses both individually and on an area basis.

Of particular significance is the proposal to amend the criteria for determining the fitness (or unfitness) of a house by the addition to the standard "bad internal layout". It is considered that a contributing factor in this connection might be, for example, a water closet opening directly from a kitchen or living room. This is an interesting addition and one in which it might be visualised can be the subject of considerable ingenuity.

The paper does not propose an adoption of the Dennington Committee's proposal to include in such criteria the lack of under cover access to water closets. Nor does it intend to remove that vexatious term "incapable of being repaired at reasonable expense". As "reasonable expense" is nowhere legally defined, it often causes difficulty during the consideration



of action on an unfit property. Many Public Health Inspectors have long felt that the expression should be dropped and that other circumstances such as age, local character, probable life as well as its environment should be taken into account.

Provision is also made for changes to be made in compensation payable on sium property demolished. Amounts equivalent to full market value will be paid to owner-occupiers and well-maintained grants will be increased.

Number of Demolition Orders made	0
Number of Closing Orders made	2
Houses demolished	0
Houses closed	2
Houses under Demolition Orders - vacant, demolition pending	4
Houses under Demolition Orders - still occupied	2

#### STANDARD GRANTS

The annual number of applications and completions for grants to improve amenities in dwellings, has been remarkably consistant over latter years, though small.

	Owner/occupier	Tenanted
1) Number of applications received	16	2
Number of applications approved	17	2
Number of applications refused	0	0
Number of houses improved	16	0
2) Amount paid in grants	£1,934. 16s. 2d.	
3) Average grant per house	£ 120. 18s. 6d.	
4) Amenities provided:		
(a) fixed bath in a bathroom	12	(d) internal water closet 13
(b) wash-hand basin	15	(e) food store 13
(c) hot water supply	14	

By failing to adhere to the proper procedure and taking heed of the advice which it is our normal practice to give, one applicant caused no small amount of consternation by his lobbying of councillors and the Member of Parliament to his support. His failure to submit an estimate of costs precluded him from obtaining the extra grant which might be obtained for new building work to provide a bathroom. Our offer to re-submit his application proved abortive when it was found he had already started the work and even then could produce no cost details.

The White Paper, as previously mentioned, deals mainly with the improvement of houses, amending existing procedure for area improvements and proposing grants to councils for environmental improvements carried out in conjunction with such schemes.

It also proposes amending the list of basic amenities by deleting the food store and substituting the requirement of a sink in its place



Maximum standard grants are also proposed to be increased from £155 to £200 and discretionary grants from £400 to £1,000.

The total number of inspections and visits relating to Public Health was 351, for Housing - 61 and for Standard Grants - 81.

### A T M O S P H E R I C   P O L L U T I O N

The Committee on Air Pollution (Beaver Committee) reporting in 1954 said amongst other things that air pollution on scale with which we are familiar with in this country is a social and economic evil which should no longer be tolerated and that it needs to be combated with the same conviction and energy as was applied one hundred years ago in securing pure water. The Report continues "We are satisfied that the most serious immediate problem to be tackled is visible pollution by smoke, grit and dust", and "real improvement can be secured only by a continuous programme urgently and insistently carried out over a number of years".

In the industrial field a great deal of work has been done to eliminate pollution from steam raising plant and the more simple industrial processes, but some problems are more complex and difficult to solve. There are problems in the iron and steel industry, in chemical engineering works and certain other industries, to which the answers are not yet known and we all know that amongst these is our own local problem, the brick industry. In these fields it may be a long time before complete satisfaction is obtained and industrialists and technologists need to be spurred to greater efforts to bring about more acceptable solutions to the problem.

It is often believed that air pollution is worse in large towns than in small ones, but it has been demonstrated that the size of a town has no effect. For average conditions air pollution problems set no limit to the size of a town, big towns can be as clean as small ones, small towns as dirty as big ones.

Domestic smoke, characterised by its high content of soot, tar and other unburnt constituents, its low-velocity, low-level emission and concentrated during the worst sort of weather for polluting air, is still the most serious problem of air pollution and it is currently reckoned that over eighty per cent of total smoke emitted is of domestic origin.

Our own plans for reducing domestic smoke failed to make progress during the year, no decision having been received in respect of the provisional approval required on two proposed smoke control areas, details of which were submitted to the Ministry late in 1967.

A beginning has been made on measuring the extent of pollution. Our "base" has been established in the Housing Department building (The Elms) where we have installed a Daily Volumetric Smoke/SO<sup>2</sup> Gauge and a small amount of chemical apparatus for carrying out daily tests. Survey of the town's western sector failed to bring to light a suitable site for a second gauge.

The apparatus is operated continuously, readings being taken at twenty four hourly intervals except at the week-ends. Measurements consists of drawing in, by means of an electric pump, a known volume of air first passing it through a filter paper to produce a smoke stain and then bubbling it through a solution of dilute hydrogen peroxide. The amount of smoke particulate collected on the filter paper is measured using a Reflectometer working on the principle of the variation in the obscuration of light given off by a photo-electric cell. Sulphur dioxide in the sample reacts with the reagent to form sulphuric acid, the amount of which can be determined by titration with an alkali. Results are expressed in microgrammes per cubic metre and are collated by the Air Pollution Division of the Ministry of Technology at their Warren Spring Laboratory at Stevenage and included in the national tables.

A representative of the Laboratory attended a meeting, called by the Medical Officer of Health, of Public Health Inspectors representing the local authorities in the North Bucks area. The meeting discussed matters concerning pollution measurement and smoke control in general and in its context with the new city. It will be recalled that previous annual reports have sought to draw attention to the advantages of taking action to keep pollution to minimum in advance of development.

Observations, during the daily round, of plumes of dense smoke rising into the air from the industrial sector, called for little detection work. The culprit was ultimately discovered to be a large factory incinerator, its shape that of a beehive and its construction of brickwork, which was in a serious state of delapidation. The combustion principle was rudimentary in that the material required to be burnt was thrown in through a large side opening and the products of combustion, instead of being led to the atmosphere by means of a chimney, merely escaped through a large hole in the domed roof. Following discussions with the firm, the structure was demolished and as the year ended the construction of a specially designed incinerator was well advanced.

Work was also completed at another factory where a smoke and grit problem existed from the utilisation of wood waste for steam raising purposes in a shell boiler. A cyclone grit arrester was incorporated into a re-arrangement of the flue system between the boiler and the chimney and although some improvement has been noted it is not certain whether this has provided the complete solution.

During the scrutinisation of plans, we continued taking steps to see that any proposals to install furnaces were properly notified and that plans of chimneys were submitted for Building Regulation approval. The fourteen notifications and approvals of seven chimney heights.

One chimney of note and one which incidently was exempt Building Regulation control, was the proposal of the Bucks County Council to provide on the district heating principle, a boiler house to serve three separate schools on the Lakes Estate, plus several other county owned buildings.



Discussions took place informally and because of the type of fuel proposed and the proximity of potentially high flats we calculated a height of seventy five feet for the chimney. During this period, however, the conversion from town's gas to natural gas was making its impact on the district and a change was made by the designers from firing the boilers by oil to that using a natural gas. Because of this reappraisal we were able to agree, as acceptable, a drastic reduction of the chimney height.

Among items put out by the Government during the year were a Circular removing restrictions placed on the use of direct acting electric space heaters in smoke control areas and a Memorandum and Regulations dealing with the measurement of grit and dust from furnaces consuming high quantities of solid fuel.

The most notable item, however, was the Clean Air Bill steered through Parliament by our local Member.

After nearly twelve years experience of operating the 1956 Act it was felt that the time was ripe to make certain improvements in its scope and to confer wider powers on local authorities. The Clean Air Act 1968 received its royal assent in October, but its enforcement was to be delayed until the following year.

The Act intends to deal with dark smoke other than that from chimneys, limiting certain grit and dust emissions, an entirely new approach in the matter of chimney height approval, prohibition of the sale of unauthorised fuels in smoke control areas and other miscellaneous matters. It also intends giving the Minister the power to direct backward local authorities in the matter of drawing up for his approval programmes for smoke control.

Complaints, smoke observations, plant visits and pollution measurement accounted for 123 visits and inspections in this field.

### P E T R O L E U M

Part of the task of Public Health Inspectors is 'to interpret the law and inform the ordinary citizen of his duties and responsibilities'.

It has often been said that statutes were drafted by lawyers for lawyers. They have never been easy documents to read and much less to comprehend their intention. The appeals that result passing from the lowest courts to the highest provide ample evidence, if any is needed, of the interpretations that can be attached to many parts of Acts and Regulations. Parliamentary draftsmen admit that it is a national sport to jeer at the composition of legal phraseology, but they emphasise how difficult it is to draft a law which is both clear and unambiguous. "Statutes should be unambiguous, but this is not the same as being readily intelligible. On the contrary the nearer you get to one the further you are likely to get from the other." (Sir Ernest Gowers)

In this precept, efforts in unambiguity seem to have been entirely successful in the two Orders and two sets of Regulations put out by the Home Office. The main effect of the Orders was to bring over 200



inflammable liquids within the scope of the principal Act. The Regulations govern the safe conveyance by road of such liquids and the distinctive labelling of vehicles and containers during such conveyance. Complicated not only in themselves, the provisions amend previous law and have to be read in conjunction with earlier regulations and the main Act.

The objects are simple, first to ensure that basic safety precautions are taken during road conveyance and second, to provide visual evidence of the hazard facing them to the emergency services in the event of accident.

The interpretation of the requirements, plus the many cross-references, schedules and definitions, had to be faced over several discussions with a local manufacturer of adhesives. Whether the outcome, within the legal jargon, was entirely successful remains to be seen, but we believe that the main object was achieved.

The conditions under which the Council issue its licences for petroleum storage are based on Model Codes of Practices issued in 1957-1958.

With new developments in methods of retailing petrol (self service stations-attended and unattended) and in technology, there has been a need for keeping requirements for safety up to date.

Long awaited revisions made their appearance in August when two new Model Codes were introduced dealing with principles of construction and licensing conditions for petrol filling stations; cans and drums, etc., storage; distribution depots and major installations. It is not intended that the recommendations should be rigidly applied to existing installations where for a variety of reasons they may not be practical or necessary.

Uniformity of administration by local authorities is one of the aims of the Association for Petroleum Acts Administration, of which the Council is a member, and it is our intention to await a common policy on licensing conditions before making any changes to the present requirements.

Activities during the year included nitrogen pressure tests on five old tanks and three defective tanks had to be filled with a slurry of weak cement. One enquiry was made for permission to use latched nozzles on pump hoses but the demonstration asked for was poorly conducted and on requesting a more substantial test, interest in installing the nozzles faded.

Our most interesting event took place at the beginning of the natural gas conversion programme. A technical blockage had occurred in the main pipe line some miles distant and as conversions were already underway emergency action had to be taken to maintain supplies.

A standby storage of L.N.G. (liquid natural gas) had to be arranged and the organisation was such that I must take this opportunity of registering praise and admiration for the speed and efficiency in which the Gas Board carried out the project.

Our first intimation of the emergency came late on a Friday afternoon and by Monday afternoon we had been appraised of the situation, the Bond Avenue site chosen, our permission given, concrete foundations laid and two

four and a half thousand gallon vertical tanks delivered. By Wednesday two mobile boilers were in operation, the tanks erected, a complicated system of pipes installed and tested, connections made to the existing underground main, L.N.G. delivered and the tanks filled and all fire precautions taken.

We issued a licence to cover the installation for three months, but after only a few weeks the emergency had passed and the equipment was dismantled.

Routine inspections plus visits to new storage sites made 283 calls on our time. All licensed premises were inspected prior to annual licence renewal, 12 informal notices were served and 10 complied with.

Over the year three new licences were granted, four discontinued, altogether a total of fifty two licences were issued involving over 222,000 gallons of petroleum spirits or mixtures.

### F A C T O R I E S

The Factories Act 1961 is concerned with the health, welfare and safety of employees. Supervision of the Act is partly in the hands of H.M. Inspector of Factories and the local authorities, termed "district councils".

#### PRESCRIBED PARTICULARS ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FACTORIES ACT 1961 PART I OF THE ACT

##### 1) INSPECTION for the purpose of the provisions as to health

Premises	Number on Register	Inspect- ions	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Section 1,2,3,4, & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	9	5	-	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	122	61	7	-
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding Outwork- ers' premises)	7	10	-	-
Total	138	76	7	-



## 2) Cases in which DEFECTS were found

	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prose- cutions were instituted
	Referred				
	Found	Reme- died	To H.M. Insp	By H.M. Insp	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	-	-	-	-	-
Overcrowding (S.2)	-	-	-	-	-
Unreasonable Temperature (S.3)	-	-	-	-	-
Inadequate Ventilation (S.4)	-	-	-	-	-
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	-	-	-	-	-
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient	-	-	-	-	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective	7	4	-	-	-
(c) Not separate for sexes	-	-	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	-	-	-	-	-
Total	7	4	-	-	-

The duties of the local authorities are confined to the administration of provisions relating to cleanliness, overcrowding, temperature, ventilation and drainage of floors in "any factory in which mechanical power is not used", and for those relating to sanitary accommodation in all factories.

The regulations concerning sanitary accommodation are now over thirty years old and though the standards for the construction of the facilities remain good, the relationship between the number of conveniences to be provided for employees - 1 to 25 - is very much out of line with the more modern requirements for office and shop workers - 1 to 15.

It is understood that there is a proposal for combining into one the Acts now separately governing working conditions of these two groups of employees, in which case it is likely that the standard will be improved.



## PART VIII OF THE ACT OUTWORK

(Sections 133 and 134)

Nature of work	No. of outworkers in August list required by Section 133(1)(c)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices Served	Prosecutions
<u>Wearing apparel</u> Making etc;	27	-	-	-	-	-
Cleaning and Washing:	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Artificial</u> <u>Flowers</u> Making of:	1	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Lampshades</u> Making of:	1	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Stuffed toys</u> Making of:	11	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Brushes</u> Making of:	15	-	-	-	-	-
Unclassified	4	-	-	-	-	-

WORKING CONDITIONS IN OFFICES & SHOPS

Non-industrial employment embraces a large variety of occupations and in many cases the number of employees is small. Nevertheless, there can be no excuse for the indolent attitude of many employers in the matter of registering premises that they have occupied.

It is often a source of amazement how little some business people know, or take the trouble to find out, of the effect that the law, generally, might have on their operations.

The latest Governmental Annual Report indicates that reports from local authorities show that the lack of notification is a widespread problem. Compliance with Section 49, which requires employers to notify the occupation of premises to the appropriate authority, is seldom

effected on an occupiers own initiative, but only after a visit by an Inspector and sometimes two or three reminders. Even then there is little appreciation that the Inspector has helped avert a possible prosecution. The Annual Report also made mention of a novel but ineffective form of heating which was provided at the loading-bay of a large retail shop. It took the form of six large candles stuck to a dinner plate over which the staff took turns to warm their hands while unloading goods.

Inspections during the year did not reveal any evidence of a deterioration of conditions. Contraventions were, as most premises had previously been visited, understandably less numerous and the majority were of a minor nature e.g. absence of thermometers and abstracts of the Act or understocked first aid boxes.

These and other problems were discussed when we received a visit from H.M. Deputy Superintending Inspector of Factories, the officer responsible for giving advice and seeing that local authorities are reasonably uniform in administration of the Act.

It is extremely doubtful if there is any other field in which the Public Health Inspector has received such a volume of law and advice in such a relatively short space of time. After a little over five years since the inception of the Act there has appeared - twelve Orders - nine sets of Regulations - thirteen official Forms and a bombardment of fifty seven Circulars and supplements to Circulars, some of which have been revised several times over.

The latest additions relate to the regulations of safety, operation and maintenance of Hoists and Lifts and guidance on lighting.

People often take lighting of a sort very much for granted. If a light comes on when they press a switch that's about all that many expect and if exactly the same thing has happened for the last twenty or thirty years without anyone complaining then obviously the lighting must be good enough.

We have always sought to seek improvement of artificial lighting and in the absence of legal standards have recommended as near as possible to those of the Code of the Illuminating Engineers Society.

The new Circular giving guidance on suitable and sufficient lighting was promised for some considerable time, but the various values given are, except in the case of food premises, less than half of those recommended by the I.E.S. Except that the guide might be regarded as absolute minima many officers enforcing the Act will regret the specification of such a low standard.

Again the suspicion must be recorded that employers are not giving the required attention to accident notification for details of only two accidents were received.

# REGISTRATIONS AND GENERAL INSPECTIONS

Class of premises	Number of premises registered during the year	Number of registered premises at end of year	Number of registered premises receiving a general inspection during the year.
Offices	10	88	15
Retail shops	15	138	40
Wholesale shops, warehouses	2	9	1
Catering establishments open to public, canteens	3	14	3
Fuel storage depots	0	1	0
Total	30	250	59

Total number of visits of all kinds by Inspectors to Registered Premises: two hundred and twenty nine

## ANALYSIS OF RECORDED PARTICULARS OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN

### REGISTERED PREMISES BY WORKPLACE

Class of Workplace	Number of persons employed
Offices	720
Retail shops	763
Wholesale department warehouses	66
Catering establishments open to public	112
Canteens	14
Fuel storage depots	2
Total	1,677

TOTAL MALES 699

TOTAL FEMALES 978



## ANALYSIS OF CONTRAVENTIONS

Section	Number of Contraventions found		Section	Number of Contraventions found	
4	Cleanliness	-	14	Seats (Sedentary Workers)	-
5	Overcrowding	-	15	Eating facilities	1
6	Temperature	10	16	Floor, passage & stairs	1
7	Ventilation	-	17	Fencing exposed parts machinery	-
8	Lighting	-	18	Protection of young persons from dangerous machinery	-
9	Sanitary conveniences	1	19	Training of young persons working at dangerous machinery	-
10	Washing facilities	3	23	Prohibition of heavy work	-
11	Supply of drinking water	-	24	First aid general provision	11
12	Clothing Accommodation	2	50	Posting of abstracts of the Act	12
13	Sitting facilities	1	TOTAL		42

Fourteen informal notices were served and thirty eight complied with.

### P E S T   C O N T R O L

In the early history of rodent control curses were thought to be effective and it is said that Shakespeare mentions the practice of rhyming rats to death. A bounty, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, offered one penny "for the heades of everie three rattes or twelve myse". Odes to the common rat or the house mouse are not likely subjects for the modern poet, but curses are still often used, though for different effect.

The mention of bounties brings me to the reference in my last report regarding the need for reviewing the scale of charges for contract work and individual treatments.

Enquiries circulated among other local authorities brought information on widely varying schemes of charging, but one got the view that it is generally accepted that pest control is a public service and that any motivation for profit might be a deterrent to efficient reporting and control.

The review was taken at a time when price increases were viewed nationally with suspicion, but the inequity of some of the older contractual charges made increases inevitable. Only two agreements failed to be renewed and both were for reasons other than proposed increases. Not all fees were changed, some were even decreased in the levelling out process and no objections were raised on the others. The hourly rate for individual treatments was raised by a nominal amount and domestic premises remain free of charge.

No charges have been made for eradicating infestations of insects but any large scale treatment would naturally have to be considered as for rodent control. Dealing with wasps and bees can often prove dangerous for the officer especially when nests or swarms are in difficult or inaccessible situations. It was felt that we should reserve the right to decline if the risk was unacceptable, also that we should require indemnification from the recipient of a service against damages or structural removals to property.

## INSECTS

Sixty seven visits were made investigating and carrying out insecticidal treatments for a variety of insects including book-lice, clover mite, black beetles and carpet beetles, etc.

The larval stage of the latter mentioned goes under the quaint name of the "woolly bear" and can do considerable damage to soft furnishings. The beetle should be fairly easy for the householder to tackle himself, especially with the range of modern insecticides. It may be identified by its similarity in shape to a ladybird, but grey in colour and having a dark herring-bone pattern. Eradication of the adult is aimed at before eggs can be laid to hatch out to fabric-seeking grub.

One enquirer, in respect of a rather ferocious looking beetle, was satisfied after identification that it was a 'Devil's coach-horse' and that it had no evil tendencies.

Reports from several houses adjacent a vacant, overgrown plot of land, that babies and young children were receiving insect bites threatened to blow up into a major incident. Some of the bites were probably those of midgies, but others may have been due to fleas, in fact, it was discovered that one pet animal had been treated for such and we also suspected some stray cats inhabiting the site. Householders blamed the overgrowth and the use of the plot as a dump, yet much of the material deposited was garden refuse from bordering gardens. The usual threat of withholding rates ensued, which does nothing more than annoy officers trying to help. We sprayed the land and persuaded the owner to turn in the growth and to erect a fence to discourage indiscriminate use of the site by outsiders.



Several wasps nests were dealt with; a swarm of bees had to be destroyed when the queen was discovered dead by a local beekeeper who was trying to capture them; another small swarm in a rain water pipe was also destroyed.

## RODENT CONTROL

Cats have been esteemed in Britain for rodent control since about the tenth century, when the prices of cats in some places were regulated according to their age and experience as mouse-catchers. Even today they have their uses, mainly as a preventative measure, for cats themselves do not usually clear an infestation.

Until a few years ago only "acute", i.e. single dose poisons were used, simply by putting down poisoned baits without any attempt at conditioning the rodent to feed. Because of "new object reaction" the method does not give consistently good results for at first the animals will avoid or only eat very small amounts continuing to feed elsewhere. To overcome this problem a system of "pre-baiting" was used where the first bait was laid for a few days unpoisoned, then on evidence of acceptance an acute poison was introduced.

Since 1950 a great advance has occurred with the introduction of anti-coagulants and now under the name "Warfarin" they are the most widely used rodenticides, having the advantage that no pre-baiting is required.

The success of anti-coagulants lies in the fact that when eaten in low concentrations in bait, symptoms of illness are slow to appear and feeding continues until a lethal dose has been absorbed. This interferes with the production of prothrombin, the substance that is necessary for clotting the blood. Rodents die of haemorrhages and especially vulnerable are those about to have litters.

Newer controls are being introduced and one, used mainly for mice, depends on reducing the body temperature so that the animal dies as the premises cool down during the night. Another, for preventing infestation of premises is a device which emits an ultra-sonic wave, the sound being unheard by humans but unbearable to rats and mice. Suitably placed in a building they are said to be a sure method of eliminating rodents from areas where hygiene is paramount.

It has been said that one rat left free to roam a warehouse for one year might eat 27 lbs of food and deposit 25,000 droppings to spoil much more. Clearly then, rodents must be controlled and advantage taken of the many methods available.

The Rodent Officer continued the now familiar pattern of visits to various Council properties, sewage works and refuse tip, etc.

The district's sewers are test baited twice a year, but invariably only few "takes" are recorded. The Field Officer of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food always attends these treatments as well as periodically visiting other potential trouble spots and has expressed his complete satisfaction on the way the work is carried out.



The hazards often confronting the Rodent Officer in the type of situation where infestations occur, or might be expected, was amply demonstrated with what could well have been a more serious accident. During a routine investigation of the garden of a vacant dwelling, he stumbled over some debris, fell and had a dagger-like broken bottle pierce his thigh for a considerable distance and resulted in several lost weeks of work.

In addition to the Rodent Officer's work, observations for rodents are included in their general visits by inspectors.

Summary of investigations and re-visits for the purposes of treating infestations (not including sewer surveys).

	Type of property		
	Non-Agricultural	Agricultural	Total
Total number of properties inspected as a result of notification	358	1	359
Total number of properties inspected in the course of survey under the Act	2,593	34	2,627
Re-visits			412

## NOISE

Noise - the unseen enemy - the symphony of the machine age - the invisible pollution - the unwanted sound.

These are amongst the definitions being mentioned when this evergrowing problem is discussed, but absolute silence is quite a rare phenomenon in nature and even rarer in communities.

It has been suggested that noise from community actions should be regarded as a form of pollution, some have even advocated "noise control zones". Social noise is often unthinking noise and due to thoughtlessness, carelessness, neglect and sometimes downright selfishness. This lack of consideration for others was mentioned in the Wilson Committee Report on Noise (1963) which said that general improvement in good manners appeared to be one of the main ways in which domestic noise could be solved.

No complaints concerning industrial noise were received during the year but seven other complaints were made. Three concerned barking dogs and another three were neighbour problems. One was of an over-enthusiastic do-it-yourself worker, another a noisy cold water cistern and the third a case of neighbourly friction resulting in exaggeration of domestic noises. The last concerned a Sunday newspaper business run from a dwelling and the noise made by delivery vehicles early in the morning. The business had apparently been in operation for many years, but the new occupier of a nearby house objected to the disturbance of his Sunday morning sleep.

Thirteen visits were made dealing with these problems.

## EXAMINATION OF PLANS

A considerable amount of time is taken up over the inspection of proposals for new building work, including correspondence and interviews with architects and builders, but the object of attaining proper compliance in the early construction stages make the use of such time well spent, averting many problems that might otherwise arise on occupation. Sixty plans were looked at for the many aspects involving factories, food premises, offices and shops, chimney heights, standard grants and petroleum storage.

## PET ANIMALS ACT 1951

Inspection of premises for suitable conditions in which to keep for sale pet animals, were made in respect of one renewal and four new Pet Shops licences.

## SCRAP METAL DEALERS ACT 1964

Local authorities are responsible for keeping a register of dealers in scrap metal who either have a store in the district or if having no store reside or have business premises in the area. The remainder of the Act is enforced by the Police.

Registrations last three years and during the period under review one application was received and duly registered.